

in my mind that, with the Almighty's blessings and hard work, that we will succeed in our mission.

The reason I say that is because I have seen the spirit of this country. I've seen the resolve of our Nation. I know the nature of the men and women who proudly call themselves Americans, people who can rise to any challenge, people who are tough, people who are determined, people who are resolute, and people, at the same time, who are compassionate and decent and honorable. And it is my honor to be the President of a country full of such people.

May God bless your work. May God continue to bless our country. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:20 p.m. at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Donna L. Mindek, president, and R. Keith Hite, executive director, Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors; Pennsylvania State Attorney General Jerry Pappert; State Senator Charles W. Dent and State Representative Paul W. Semmel of Pennsylvania; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Muqtada Al Sadr, Iraqi Shiite cleric whose militia engaged in an uprising in Iraq in early April. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Dinner for Senator Arlen Specter in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

April 19, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. I'm here to say it as plainly as I can: Arlen Specter is the right man for the United States Senate.

Thank you all for coming out. It's good to be back in "Knowledge City." [Laughter] The last time I was here, Jerome Bettis was in the crowd. [Laughter] Remember "Bettis the Bus"? He said, "Keep it short, President." [Laughter] I listened.

I do have some things I want to say. I first of all appreciate my friendship with Arlen Specter. He's been a friend for quite a while. I'm proud to campaign for him. We've got a good, frank relationship. The last time—one of the last times we flew here to the great State of Pennsylvania, as we were coming down the stairs together, I took a look at a pretty ratty looking coat he was wearing.

[Laughter] I said, "Senator, if we're going to keep company, I'd advise you to upgrade your wardrobe." [Laughter] He's a frugal man. [Laughter] He was telling me he wore that coat back in the Korean war. [Laughter] Turns out, his family got the word and bought him a new coat, and you're looking awfully sharp today. [Laughter]

I'm proud to tell you I think he's earned another term as a United States Senator. He is a tough and principled legislator. He can get things done for the people of Pennsylvania. He's a little bit independent-minded sometimes. [Laughter] There's nothing wrong with that. He is dedicated to the people of this State. He truly is. We spend a lot of time together. He's always talking about what he can do for the people here.

I—let me tell you what, I can count on this man. See, that's important. He's a firm ally when it matters most. I can look at Arlen Specter and say, "I need your help, Mr. Senator," and he'll give it.

I appreciate you coming tonight. I urge you to go back to your neighborhoods and turn out the vote. There's no doubt in my mind he'll win the primary, and he'll win the general election, and that's good for Pennsylvania.

Seems like this administration is paying attention to Pittsburgh. After all, the Vice President was here over the weekend. [Laughter] And I want to thank you for being hospitable to the great Vice President. He is the finest Vice President our Nation has ever had. Mother heard me say that the other day, and she said, "Wait a minute, boy." [Laughter]

I'm a man of strong opinions. I tell it like I see it. Laura Bush is the finest First Lady our country has ever had as well. She sends her very best to Arlen and thanks you all for coming tonight as well. She knows what kind of a good working relationship I have with Senator Specter. She's, by the way—she's just a joy to be around. She is a great comforting soul who—I'm just lucky she said "yes" when I asked her to marry me. [Laughter]

I want to thank—I'm proud to be up here with the junior Senator. [Laughter] He is a lot younger than we are. [Laughter] But he's doing a great job as well for the people of

Pennsylvania, Rick Santorum. I mean it. I know that Congressman Tim Murphy is here. Tim, thank you for coming. I'm proud you're here.

We've got people running for office here. I want to thank you all for coming. I want to thank the party activists who are here. I want to thank you for what you're going to do to turn out the vote at the primary. I want to thank you for what you're fixing to do come November. See, I'm counting on you.

You need to get out and turn out that vote. This is the kind of State where you can look at your neighbor, whether he be Republican, Democrat, or independent, and convince them to be for us. You need to—you don't worry about party label when it comes to turning out the vote this November. Get people to do their duty. Get out to the grassroots, and get on the phones, and put up the signs. And tell people in this country they have a duty, as people who live in a democracy, to show up to vote.

And when you do, you can tell them this: Tell them in the last 3 years we've accomplished great things. Most importantly, tell them we've got a positive vision.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Let me finish first, before you make up your mind. *[Laughter]*

You tell them this. You tell them the most important thing is that we have a positive vision for winning the war against terror and for extending peace and freedom throughout this world. We have a positive vision for creating jobs and promoting opportunity and compassion here at home. Arlen and I will leave no doubt where we stand, and we will win in Pennsylvania, and I'm going to win all across the country on November the second.

The last 3 years have brought serious challenges, and we've given serious answers. We came to office with a stock market in decline and an economy headed into recession. We worked with Arlen and Rick and Members of the United States Congress to deliver historic tax relief, and now our economy is the fastest growing of any major industrialized nation in the world.

We uncovered corporate crimes that cost people jobs and their savings. So we passed

strong corporate reforms and made it abundantly clear that we will not tolerate the dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning. So we pursued the terrorist enemy across the world and captured or killed many key leaders of the Al Qaida network. The rest of them will learn there is no cave or hole deep enough to hide from American justice.

We strengthened our defenses here at home. Arlen Specter helped author a bill to create the Department of Homeland Security. I proudly signed the bill into law and appointed your former Governor, Tom Ridge, as the Secretary of Homeland Security.

We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. So we ended two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We freed over 50 million people. Once again, America is proud to lead the armies of liberation.

When Dick Cheney and I came to Washington, we found a military that was underfunded and underappreciated. So we gave our military the resources and respect they deserve. And today, no one can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

It is the President's job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations.

Great events will turn on this election. The man who sits in the Oval Office will set the course of the war on terror and the direction of our economy. The security and the prosperity of America are at stake.

I'm running against an experienced Senator who has built up quite a record. He's been in Washington long enough to take both sides of just about every issue. *[Laughter]* My opponent voted for the PATRIOT Act, voted for NAFTA, voted for the No Child Left Behind Act, and for the use of force in Iraq. Now, he opposes the PATRIOT Act and NAFTA and the No Child Left Behind Act and the liberation of Iraq. If he could find a third side to an issue, I'm confident he'd take it. *[Laughter]*

When a President speaks, he must mean what he says, and he must be clear. He must

be crystal clear. Someone recently asked the Senator from Massachusetts why he voted against the \$87 billion funding bill to help our troops in Iraq, and here's what he said: "I actually did vote for the 87 billions, before I voted against it." End of quote. *[Laughter]*

The voters are going to have a clear choice in this campaign. It's a choice—it is a choice between keeping the tax relief that has been moving this economy forward or putting the burden of higher taxes back on the American people. It is a choice between an America that leads the world with strength and confidence or an America that is uncertain in the face of danger.

The other side hasn't offered much in the way of strategies to win the war or to grow the economy. You know, I know it's early in the campaign, but thus far, all we've heard is a lot of old bitterness and partisan anger. He's going to find out right quick that anger is not an agenda for the future of America.

I look forward to campaigning with Arlen this fall on an agenda that is based upon our optimism, our confidence, our determination, and our resolve for the future of this country.

A big issue for every family in America is the Federal tax burden. With the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was the President, we left more money in the hands that earned it. By spending and investing and to help create new jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Federal Government would have.

Because of good policies and hard work, our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. America added 308,000 new jobs in the month of March, the highest monthly job growth total in almost 4 years. Since August, our economy has added over three-quarters of a million new jobs. There's confidence being displayed by our employers. There's rising hope of workers. In the second half of 2003, the economy grew at the fastest rate in nearly 20 years. Manufacturing activity is increasing. The steel industry is strong. Business investment is rising. Disposable income is rising. Inflation is low. Homeownership is at an historic high. The tax relief we passed is working.

When I needed him, he was with me on tax relief.

My opponent took a different view of tax relief. When we passed an increase in the child credit to help families, he voted no. When we reduced the marriage penalty, he voted against it. When we created a lower, 10-percent bracket for working families, he voted against it. When we reduced the tax on dividends that many seniors depend upon it, Senator Kerry voted no. When we gave small businesses a tax incentive to expand and hire, he voted against it. We're beginning to see a pattern here. *[Laughter]*

But when tax increases are proposed, it's a lot easier to get a "yes" vote out of Senator Kerry. Over the years, he's voted over 350 times for higher taxes on the American people, including the biggest tax increase in American history. He supported higher gas taxes 11 times and once favored a tax increase of 50 cents a gallon. That would cost you another \$5 or more every time you fill up your tank. For that kind of money, he ought to throw in a free car wash. *[Laughter]*

I want your neighbors to listen closely to the rhetoric of the campaign. Thus far, my opponent has proposed over a trillion dollars of new spending, and the campaign is just getting started. *[Laughter]* He says he's going to pay for this by taxing the rich.

You can't pay for a trillion dollars of new spending by taxing the rich. What that really means is, he's going to have to eliminate every one of the single tax reductions we passed, and he's still going to have to raise taxes on top of that. In order to fund his new spending programs, he's going to have to tax people who go to work. He's going to have to raise the marriage penalty. He's going to have to lower the child credit. It turns out if you have a job, if you have a child, if you have a dollar to spare, Senator Kerry thinks you're rich enough to pay more taxes. The good news is, we're not going to let him do it.

Higher taxes right now would undermine growth and destroy jobs just as this economy is getting stronger. To help grow the American economy and to create more jobs, I have a better idea: We ought to make all the tax cuts permanent.

Our future also depends on America's leadership in the world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong, but we still

face serious dangers. Al Qaida is wounded but not broken. Terrorists are testing our will in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weakness and uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

This Nation is strong and confident in the cause of freedom. Today, no friend or enemy doubts the word of the United States of America. America and our allies gave an ultimatum to the terror regime in Afghanistan. The Taliban chose defiance. And thankfully for the women and children of Afghanistan, the Taliban are no longer in power. America and our allies gave an ultimatum to the terror regime in Iraq. The dictator chose defiance, and now the dictator sits in a prison cell.

September the 11th, 2001, taught a lesson we must never forget. It's a lesson I will never forget: America must confront threats before they fully materialize.

In Iraq, my administration looked at the intelligence, and we saw a threat. Arlen and his colleagues in Congress looked at the intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. The previous administration and Congress looked at the same intelligence and made regime change in Iraq the policy of our country.

In 2002, the U.N. Security Council yet again demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. They were worried. They were worried not only because of the intelligence; they remembered that he had used chemical weapons against his own people. As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein refused to comply with the demands of the world. So I had a choice to make: Either take the word of a madman, or take action to defend America. Faced with that choice, I will defend America every time.

My opponent admits that Saddam Hussein was a threat. He just didn't support my decision to remove Saddam from power. Perhaps he was hoping Saddam would lose the next Iraqi election. *[Laughter]* We showed the dictator and a watching world that America means what it says. Because of our actions, because of the actions by our coalition, Saddam Hussein's torture chambers are closed. Because we acted, Iraq's weapons programs

are ended forever. Because we acted, nations like Libya have gotten the message and renounced their own weapons programs. Because we acted, an example of democracy is rising at the very heart of the Middle East. Because we acted, the world is more free. Because we acted, America is more secure.

We've had some tough weeks recently in Iraq. There are thugs and terrorists who would rather go on killing the innocent than accept the advance of liberty. There's a reason why. They know that a free Iraq, with freedom in the heart of the Middle East, will be a major defeat for the cause of terror. That's why they're reacting the way they react. They're trying to shake our will. These killers are trying to shake the will of the civilized world and America. They don't understand America. We will never be intimidated by thugs and assassins. We will strike the terrorists in Iraq. We will defeat them there so we do not have to face them in our own country.

Other nations are helping to build a free society in Iraq, because they understand what we know: It will make us all safer. And we're standing with the brave Iraqi people as they assume more of their own defense and move towards self-government. These are not easy tasks. It's not easy to go from democracy—to democracy from brutal tyranny. They're hard tasks, but they are essential tasks. America will finish what we have begun, and we will win this essential victory in the war against terror.

On national security, Americans have the clearest possible choice. My opponent says he approves of bold action in the world but only if other countries do not object. I'm all for united action, and so are more than 30 coalition partners in Iraq right now. But I will never submit America's national security needs to the rulers of other nations.

Some are skeptical that the war on terror is really a war at all. My opponent said, and I quote, "The war on terror is far less of a military operation and far more of an intelligence gathering, law enforcement operation." I strongly disagree.

Our Nation followed this approach after the World Trade Center was bombed in 1993. The matter was handled in the courts and thought by some to be settled. But the

terrorists were still training in Afghanistan. They were still plotting in other nations and drawing up more ambitious plans. After the chaos and carnage of September the 11th, it is never enough to serve our enemies with legal papers. With those attacks, the terrorists and their supporters declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got.

Our men and women in the United States military are taking great risks, and they're doing great work. At bases across our country and in the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with them, with those who defend us, with those who sacrifice for our security. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. And I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom and the cause of our security is in really good hands.

This Nation is prosperous and strong, yet we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. We're strong because of the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We're strong because of the institutions that help give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations. The values and institutions are fundamental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for fair treatment of faith-based groups—all faith-based groups—so they can receive Federal support for their works of compassion and healing. We will not stand for Government discrimination against people of faith.

We stand for welfare reforms that require work and strengthen marriage. We have helped millions of Americans find independence and dignity. We will not stand for any attempt to weaken those reforms and to send people back into lives of dependence.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every person matters. We will not stand for the treatment of any life as a commodity to be experimented upon or exploited or cloned.

We stand for the confirmation of judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law. We will not stand for judges who undermine democracy by legislating from the bench or judges who try to remake the values of America by court order.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. The culture of this country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life.

If you are fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart. If you are worried about the quality of the education in your community, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you are a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbors, just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. You and I are living in a period when the stakes are high and the challenges are difficult. We're living in a period when resolve is needed.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. I'll never forget the day. There were workers in hardhats shouting at me as loud as they could, "Whatever it takes." One guy looked at me and said, "Don't let me down." As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend the security of America, whatever it takes.

In these times, I've also been a witness to the character of this Nation. Not so long ago, some had their doubts about the American character and our capacity to meet a serious challenge or to serve a cause greater than self-interest. But Americans have given their answer. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I've seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country. We've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most.

We're going to need all these qualities for the work ahead. We have a war to win, and the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have a duty to spread opportunity to every part of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it, and we know that for our great country, the best days lie ahead.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:21 p.m. at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Jerome Bettis, running back for the Pittsburgh Steelers of the National Football League.

Remarks in a Discussion on the PATRIOT Act in Buffalo, New York

April 20, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. I think you're going to find this to be a really interesting discussion about how Federal, State, and local authorities are working hard to prevent a terrorist attack. That's what we're here to talk about—and why it's important for those of us in positions of authority to give Federal, State, and local authorities all the tools necessary to do the job we expect of them. That's what we're here to talk about, but I've got some things I want to say before we start talking about it.

First, I am glad to be at the home of the mighty Buffalo Bills. I traveled today with Congressman Quinn and Congressman Reynolds, two fine Members of the United States Congress from this area, who assured me this is the year. [*Laughter*] I want to thank Jack and Tom for coming today. Thank you for your strong leadership. Thanks for caring a lot about the people of the Buffalo, New York, area. Thanks for your steadfast concern about the security of our country. I appreciate your service.

I also appreciate the service of the really fine Governor of the State of New York, George Pataki. Thanks for coming.

I know we've got State and local authorities who are here. I appreciate your service. For the local authorities, my only advice is make sure you fill the potholes—[*laughter*]—empty the garbage—[*laughter*]—answer the phone calls. But thanks for coming today.

This message today is aimed as much at you as it is anybody else.

Today we have got an interesting—a lot of families with us, but one that struck me as worthy of note, and that's the Conroy family. Where's Peggy Conroy? Somewhere. There she is. Good. Hi, Peggy. Thanks. The reason I brought up Peggy is, I want you to know that Peggy's husband is a staff sergeant in the National Guard, the 105th Military Police Unit in Karbala, Iraq. She represents many of the families of this area and the country who are sacrificing to see to it that the world is more free and more peaceful.

I appreciate so very much your steadfast love for your husband. You honor us with your presence today, and I'm really glad you brought Billy and Jeff and Tyler. Billy and Jeff really represent the greatest spirit of our country. Not only do they love their dad and pray for their dad, but they're collecting school supplies for the Iraqi children. In other words, they're going to their own schoolmates and saying, "How best can we not only help secure Iraq so it can become a free country, how best can we show the compassion of America?" And I want to thank you guys for honoring your dad and honoring our country.

I also met a fellow named Frank Brusino. Where are you, Frank? There he is. Frank is an interesting character. [*Laughter*] He is a retired brigadier general in the Army Reserves, a paratrooper, who is now very much involved with the Senior Corps, the Citizen Corps Council. In other words, their job is to help provide law enforcement with additional volunteers so law enforcement can better do its job. For the first-responders who are here, I think you know the valuable addition that Citizen Corps Councils have made, so you can do your work better.

The reason I bring up Frank is, you know, a lot of times they talk about the strength of America as being in our military. That's part of our strength, and we're going to keep the military strong, by the way, so the world will be more peaceful. They talk about the strength of our country being the fact that we're a prosperous nation, and we need to make sure we continue to expand prosperity so people can find work. But the true strength of the country lies in the hearts and